



# INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE 655

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## National Intelligence Awards Program

**A. AUTHORITY:** The National Security Act of 1947, as amended; Executive Order 12333, as amended; and other applicable provisions of law.

### B. PURPOSE

1. This Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) establishes the National Intelligence Awards Program (NIAP), consisting of monetary and non-monetary awards to recognize distinguished service or exceptional contribution to the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC), or to a particular IC profession, function, or intelligence discipline.

2. This Directive replaces ICD 655, *National Intelligence Awards Program*, amended February 9, 2012, and rescinds E/S 00999, *Recognizing Our Intelligence Community's Heroes*, October 1, 2008.

### C. APPLICABILITY

1. This Directive applies to the IC, as defined by the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, and to such other elements of any department or agency as may be designated by the President, or designated jointly by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and the head of the department or agency concerned, as an element of the IC.

2. This Directive complements departmental and IC elements' awards programs. IC elements should consider departmental policies when nominating individuals or teams for an IC award, as these policies may limit eligibility.

### D. POLICY

1. The NIAP, established under the authority of 50 U.S.C. Section 3024(f)(3)(A)(iii), as amended, includes the highest honors the DNI, as the head of the IC, can bestow in recognition of significant contributions to the IC as a whole, by employing a variety of awards to recognize excellence, leadership, innovation, personal sacrifice, and other acts of distinguished service. The Assistant Director for Human Capital (AD/HC) serves as the DNI's designee to administer the NIAP and is the accountable official for this policy. The NIAP shall consist of two categories of awards:

a. National Intelligence Community Award (NICA). A NICA is granted by the DNI and recognizes significant and lasting contributions to the IC (see Annex).

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(1) The AD/HC also serves as the DNI's designee to manage the NICA program.

(2) The National Intelligence Awards Review Board (NIARB), comprising representatives from across the IC, is responsible for soliciting NICA nominations, recommending appropriate DNI action on award nominations, and providing feedback on nominations.

(3) Individuals or groups may be nominated for a NICA by following processes and procedures established by the AD/HC.

(4) IC element heads are responsible for endorsing NICA nominations. This responsibility may be delegated to executive-level officials, as appropriate.

b. National Intelligence Professional Award (NIPA). A NIPA is granted by or on behalf of an IC NIPA Senior Program Executive (SPE) and recognizes distinguished service or exceptional contribution to an IC profession, function, or intelligence discipline.

(1) SPEs are senior officials of the Office of the Director of Intelligence (ODNI) including the Deputy Directors of National Intelligence; the Assistant Directors of National Intelligence; the Directors of the National Counterterrorism Center, the National Counterproliferation Center, and the National Counterintelligence and Security Center; the Heads of Independent Offices; and other senior IC or ODNI officials designated by the DNI.

(2) To establish a NIPA program, the AD/HC will collaborate with an SPE to develop an applicable IC Standard (ICS) in accordance with Intelligence Community Policy Guidance (ICPG) 101.2, *Intelligence Community Standards*. The ICS will describe the monetary and/or non-monetary awards under the NIPA program, each award's eligibility and nomination criteria, the process for reviewing and providing feedback on nominations, how to publicly recognize award recipients, and the funding source and process for approving monetary awards.

(3) Once established, the SPE is responsible for maintaining their NIPA program. A SPE may add or remove awards in their existing NIPA program with AD/HC concurrence.

(4) A NIPA nomination, in contrast to a NICA nomination, does not require IC element head (or executive-level official) endorsement, and may be endorsed by an appropriate, lower-level IC element official.

2. The NIAP, including the NICA and NIPA programs, conveys formal recognition to an individual or group through monetary and/or non-monetary awards.

a. Monetary awards recognize the recipient(s) with financial remuneration that qualifies as taxable income.

(1) A monetary NIAP award must specify the maximum amount allowed for an individual, which typically does not exceed \$10,000. A monetary award in excess of \$5,000, up to the \$25,000 limit, requires DNI approval. SPEs can approve monetary awards of \$5,000 or less.

(2) The DNI may, at his or her discretion, choose to deviate from these award limitations as permitted and in accordance with existing DNI authority.

(3) Receipt of a NIAP award for a specific achievement is not intended to prevent an individual from receiving a performance-based bonus or a departmental or agency-level award for that achievement, so long as the applicable legal and eligibility requirements are met.

b. Non-monetary awards recognize recipients by providing a certificate, medal, medallion, plaque, or other keepsake of nominal monetary value that may indicate the recipient's relationship with the IC and the accomplishment for which the award is given.

c. Recipients of a NIAP award may not use this recognition in any commercial advertising.

3. All current IC civilian employees are eligible for awards covered by this Directive. All uniformed U.S. military personnel assigned or attached to the IC are eligible for non-monetary awards covered by this Directive. If permitted by departmental policy, individuals outside the IC may be eligible for non-monetary awards.

a. Eligible individuals outside the IC include:

(1) U.S. Government (USG) civilian employees outside the IC;

(2) Uniformed U.S. military personnel assigned to a USG department or agency outside of the IC;

(3) Employees of U.S. state, local, or tribal governments;

(4) Private U.S. citizens, having no commercial or profit-making relationship with the IC, who have made significant contribution to a U.S. IC effort; and

(5) Foreign nationals, such as military or intelligence partners, who have made a significant contribution to a U.S. IC effort.

b. For eligibility criteria for specific awards, see the Annex of this Directive for a NICA or the appropriate ICS for a NIPA.

c. Individuals or teams shall be nominated for a NICA or NIPA within one year of the completion of the event, accomplishment, or service that provides the basis for the nomination, unless exceptional circumstances justify a nomination outside this time period.

d. IC civilian employees nominated for an award shall have at least a successful performance assessment and no disciplinary or other adverse actions pending against them at the time of nomination and during the timeframe in which the nomination-related achievement took place.

e. Individuals outside the IC who are nominated for an award shall be carefully considered in order to prevent any unfavorable reflection upon the IC.

f. If a team is nominated for a NICA or NIPA group award, then U.S. civilian employees and U.S. military personnel on the team are eligible to receive the award.

g. All awards covered by this Directive may be awarded posthumously. Posthumous awards do not require that the accomplishment or service occurred within the previous year or that nominees be employed by the USG at the time of death.

h. Lifetime achievement awards are identified in the Annex of this Directive. Lifetime achievement awards do not require that the individual be employed by the USG when nominated, and it is not required that the accomplishment or service occurred within the previous year.

i. An individual or group recognized by a NIPA may, at the discretion of the DNI or designee, also receive a NICA for the same accomplishment.

j. The DNI may directly award an individual or team for an exceptional accomplishment that significantly benefits the IC.

k. The DNI, in extraordinary circumstances, may choose to award an individual or individuals who normally would not be eligible to receive a NICA as permitted and in accordance with existing DNI authority, and may choose to establish a new, one-time NICA for this purpose.

4. NIAP administration includes:

a. Budgeting for IC Awards. The AD/HC will include funding for the NICA program in AD/HC's Congressional Budget Justification Book (CBBJ) submissions, clearly identifying that the funds are utilized for an IC-wide awards program. Similarly, SPEs will include funding for NIPA programs in their CBBJ submissions, clearly identifying that the funds are utilized for an IC-wide awards program.

b. Travel Expense Reimbursement. The IC element that submitted an award nomination may reimburse an award recipient's travel expenses associated with attendance or participation in an awards ceremony in accordance with applicable laws and departmental policies.

c. Security and Cover Considerations. All applicable IC and IC element cover and security policies shall be considered during the NIAP nomination process, as well as during approval and receipt of an award. Award nominations will receive any necessary review or approval from security personnel prior to submission to the ODNI or relevant SPE. For NICA nominations, AD/HC shall maintain procedures for limiting access to award nominations and associated records including those that have cover or other security concerns. For NIPA nominations, the SPE will maintain such procedures.

d. Classification and Pre-Publication Reviews. Award nominations shall undergo classification review prior to submission to the ODNI or relevant SPE. Classified nominations shall be portion-marked. Award nominations will include an appropriately cleared, unclassified citation that has undergone a pre-publication review and is suitable for reading at an unclassified award ceremony.

**E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## 1. The DNI will:

- a. Authorize and establish the NIAP;
- b. Approve recommended NICA award nominations, as appropriate;
- c. Preside over NICA presentation ceremonies;
- d. At his or her sole discretion, establish a new, one-time NICA or issue an existing NICA to an individual or individuals who normally would not be eligible to receive such awards; and
- e. Approve nominations for monetary awards in excess of \$5,000 and up to \$25,000.

## 2. IC element heads shall:

- a. Nominate, and/or endorse, eligible and deserving individuals and groups, as applicable, for NICA and NIPA recognition;
  - (1) Delegate, as appropriate, the authority to nominate and/or endorse NICA award nominations to the deputy IC element head or equivalent executive-level official of the IC element who has the authority to act on the IC element head's behalf;
  - (2) Delegate, as appropriate, the authority to nominate and endorse NIPA award nominations to a senior officer (or officers) of the IC element; and
  - (3) Ensure appropriate performance, classification, and pre-publication reviews are conducted prior to submission of award nomination packages.
- b. Ensure award recipients are available to attend or participate remotely in recognition ceremonies, provide administrative support and travel funds for nominees/award recipients, as appropriate, and encourage award recipients' supervisors and coworkers to attend recognition ceremonies; and
- c. Appoint representatives from their IC element to the NIARB.

## 3. The AD/HC shall:

- a. As the accountable official, implement this policy and oversee the NIAP;
- b. Periodically evaluate NIAP programs and recommend improvements to the DNI in consultation with the IC element heads;
- c. Manage the NICA program on behalf of the DNI;
- d. Approve new or amended NIPA programs;
- e. Provide funding and other support for the NICA program including procuring and maintaining an appropriate inventory of awards; and

f. Include funding for the NICA program in AD/HC's CBJB submissions, clearly identifying that the funds are utilized for an IC-wide awards program.


4. NIPA SPEs or designees shall:

- a. With AD/HC approval, design, develop, establish, and fund one or more NIPA programs, as appropriate;
- b. Manage NIPA programs in coordination with AD/HC;
- c. Approve nominations for monetary (up to \$5,000) and non-monetary awards provided under their respective NIPA programs;
- d. Include funding for NIPA programs in their CBJB submissions, clearly identifying that the funds are utilized for an IC-wide awards program;
- e. Endorse nominations submitted to the DNI for approval, as appropriate; and
- f. Preside over NIPA presentation ceremonies.







5. The NIARB, through a Chair designated by the DNI, shall:

- a. Solicit, receive, and review appropriate NICA nominations in a timely manner;
- b. Recommend NICA award nominations for DNI approval in accordance with the provisions of this Directive; and
- c. Establish procedures for providing timely feedback to nominating elements about NICA nominations reviewed by the board.



**F. EFFECTIVE DATE:** This Directive becomes effective on the date of signature.

  
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Director of National Intelligence



October 16, 2022  
Date



<b>ANNEX - National Intelligence Community Award (NICA) Matrix</b>					
<b>Award Category: Significant Contribution Awards</b>					
<b>Illustration</b>	<b>Order of Precedence</b>	<b>Name of Award</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Lifetime Achievement 1</b>	<b>George Washington Spymaster Award</b>	Recognizes the extraordinary efforts of intelligence professionals who are exceptional leaders and innovators within the IC. Their visionary leadership, invaluable contributions, and unmatched accomplishments have revolutionized the IC and fundamentally transformed intelligence operations for ensuring the preservation of our national security.	USG IC civilian and military personnel, and others as determined by the DNI; individual award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
	<b>2</b>	<b>National Intelligence Cross</b>	Recognizes conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and courage in the face of a significant and known risk (including risk to life and limb) above and beyond the call of duty, performed in response to a threat to national security. The Intelligence Cross will be awarded on a highly selective and rare basis.	USG IC civilian and military personnel, and others as determined by the DNI; individual award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
	<b>3</b>	<b>National Intelligence Medal for Valor</b>	Recognizes heroism and courage in connection with an IC mission contribution to national security. The Medal for Valor will be awarded on a highly selective and rare basis.	USG IC civilian and military personnel, and others as determined by the DNI; individual award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
	<b>4</b>	<b>National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal</b>	Recognizes sustained, selfless service of the highest order, and/or extraordinary and long-lasting contributions to the IC and the US by an individual in a position of great responsibility. Awarded when appropriate and on a highly selective basis.	USG civilian and military personnel; individual award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
	<b>5</b>	<b>National Intelligence Superior Service Medal</b>	Recognizes superior service and/or lasting contribution to the IC and US over a sustained period by an individual; awarded when appropriate and on a highly selective basis.	USG civilian and military personnel; individual award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
	<b>6</b>	<b>National Intelligence Exceptional Achievement Medal</b>	Recognizes a single exceptional contribution to the IC and the US; awarded on a very selective and limited basis.	USG civilian and military personnel; individual award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC



	7	<b>National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Citation</b>  <b>Culper Ring – Special Emphasis National Intelligence Meritorious Unit</b>	<p>Recognizes a single act of meritorious service performed by an IC organizational unit or team, with emphasis on those that involve individuals from two or more IC elements and whose collective contributions on behalf of the IC deserve special recognition.</p> <p>In keeping with the spirit of the Spymaster Award, the Culper Ring annually recognizes an act of meritorious service by an IC unit or team whose visionary leadership, creativity, innovation, invaluable contribution and unmatched impact has revolutionized the IC and fundamentally transformed intelligence.</p>	USG civilian and military personnel; group award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
No Image Available	8	<b>National Intelligence Medallion</b>	Recognizes an important achievement or commendable contribution involving a single act or service to the IC and the US; recognizes special and unique contributions to the successful accomplishment of an IC mission.	Non-IC USG civilian and military personnel; individual or group award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
No Image Available	9	<b>National Intelligence Certificate of Distinction</b>	Recognizes a notable achievement involving a single act or service; may be awarded for sustained superior performance, a single accomplishment, or a contribution, act or service of merit.	USG civilian and military personnel; individual or group award	Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC
No Image Available	10	<b>National Intelligence Special Act or Service Award</b>	Recognizes a significant act or contribution by an individual or group that results in significant, quantifiable savings or other tangible benefits to the US and/or the IC. Nominations must provide specific evidence of the tangible savings or benefits that accrue as a result of the special act or contribution. Nominations must include a recommended award amount for each recipient. This award may not duplicate other monetary awards for the same tangible benefits.	USG civilian personnel; individual or group award	Monetary for USG civilian employees only.
	11	<b>National Intelligence Community EEO and Diversity Exemplary Leadership Award</b>	Recognizes outstanding achievement and performance by a senior IC officer in creating an environment of equal employment opportunity, diversity, and inclusion.	USG civilian and military personnel; individual award	At DNI discretion, may be accompanied by monetary recognition for USG civilian personnel only. POC: ODNI/EEO



	12	<b>Intelligence Community EEO and Diversity Outstanding Achievement Award</b>	<p>Recognizes a significant act or noteworthy accomplishment related to equal employment opportunity, diversity, and inclusion.</p>	<p>USG civilian and military personnel; individual or group award</p>	<p>At DNI discretion, may be accompanied by monetary recognition for USG civilian personnel only. POC: ODNI/EEO</p>
		<b>National Intelligence Distinguished Public Service Medal</b>	<p>This is the highest award granted to non-career Federal employees, private citizens, and others who have performed a distinguished service of significance to the IC as a whole or service of such exceptional significance to ODNI that it warrants acknowledgement. The nominee may have rendered service or assistance at considerable personal sacrifice and inconvenience that was motivated by patriotism, good citizenship and/or a sense of public responsibility. This award is generally reserved for those with a direct working relationship with senior officials in the Federal government (e.g. DNI, heads of IC elements).</p>	<p>Individuals not employed by an IC element, non-career federal employees, private citizens, foreign nationals, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act employees may be nominated for this award. These awards are highly selective and approved under careful consideration by the DNI. Contact AD/HC for more information.</p>	<p>Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC</p>

		<b>National Intelligence Superior Public Service Medal</b>	<p>This award is granted to non-career Federal employees, private citizens, and others who have performed a superior service to the IC as a whole or a service of such significance to ODNI that it warrants acknowledgement. The nominee may have rendered service or assistance at some personal sacrifice and inconvenience that was motivated by patriotism, good citizenship and/or a sense of public responsibility.</p>	<p>Individuals not employed by an IC element, non-career federal employees, private citizens, foreign nationals, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act employees may be nominated for this award. These awards are highly selective and approved under careful consideration by the DNI. Contact AD/HC for more information.</p>	<p>Non-monetary; POC: AD/HC</p>
<b>Award Category: Special Category Awards</b>					
		<b>Galileo Award</b>	<p>Recognizes creative solutions to our Nation's future intelligence challenges. Normally granted on the basis of competitively judged papers submitted annually by individuals for juried review.</p>	<p>USG civilian and military personnel; individual award</p>	<p>Monetary for USG civilian employees only. POC: ODNI/PC</p>